

**2015 MASSACHUSETTS YOUTH HEALTH SURVEY (MYHS)
FACT SHEET**

MIDDLE SCHOOL

Why is the survey being done? How will the results be used?

The Massachusetts Departments of Elementary and Secondary Education and Public Health will use the MYHS results to (1) determine the extent to which adolescents practice health risk behaviors; (2) monitor how priority health-risk behaviors among middle school students increase, decrease, or remain the same over time; (3) evaluate the impact of state and local efforts to reduce high-risk behaviors; and (4) develop and redesign comprehensive health education programs and other strategies to help reduce risk behaviors.

Are sensitive questions asked?

Some questions may be considered sensitive. Drug, alcohol and tobacco use, suicide, physical fighting, and weapon-carrying pose a threat to students' health and lives. The only way to determine the extent to which adolescents are at risk is to ask questions about these behaviors. Questions are presented in a straightforward and careful manner in recognition that these are sensitive issues.

How were the schools selected?

Through a random computerized selection process, 116 schools were selected to participate statewide. Within these randomly selected schools, 6th through 8th grade classes will be randomly selected to participate in the survey. Approximately 2 classes will participate per school.

Is student participation voluntary?

Yes. Students of selected classrooms will be informed that they can choose whether to complete the survey. Students do not need written parental permission to participate, however schools must notify parents of the survey and allow them to opt their child out of the survey. There are no repercussions against the school, student, or parent if a child does not participate in the survey.

How long will it take the students to fill out the questionnaire?

One class period is needed to complete the written questionnaire. There is no physical test or exam involved.

Will student participation be anonymous? Will student privacy be protected?

Yes. Survey administration procedures have been designed to protect student privacy and allow for anonymous participation. Specially trained ESE and DPH representatives will administer the survey. Teachers are not involved directly. Furthermore, no personal identifiers are contained on the answer sheets completed by the students. Neither students' nor schools' names are ever used.

Will certain students be surveyed again to see how their behavior changes?

No. Each year that the survey is conducted, a new sample will be drawn. It will be impossible to track students who participate because no identifying information will be collected.

Will schools or students be identified in the results?

Results will not be reported at the district, school, class, or student level. Participating districts, schools, and students will not be identified.

Where can I see the results of the survey from previous years?

We are including a copy of the Health and Risk Behaviors of Massachusetts Youth 2013 report with this mailing. You can also find it online at: www.mass.gov/eohhs/gov/departments/dph/programs/admin/dmoa/health-survey/myhs/